

Report on an unannounced short follow-up inspection of

HMP & YOI Thorn Cross

28–30 July 2008

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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Introduction

Thorn Cross, near Warrington, is an open young offender institution. Until recently, it held young adults and juveniles but, following the Youth Justice Board's decision to withdraw funding, it now holds a mixture of young adults (18-21) and adult prisoners aged 21 to 25.

Previous inspections have commended the very good work being done at Thorn Cross. In spite of the change in its population, this short follow-up inspection found that it had sustained this in most areas. However, it was disappointing to note that work on resettlement, a key function of such a prison, had dipped since the last inspection.

Thorn Cross remained a safe environment, and had taken action to reduce the number of absconds. However, its violence reduction strategy needed amendment to reflect the change in its population and to ensure that all incidents of bullying were identified and dealt with. The physical environment, and relationships between staff and prisoners, were generally good – though both were significantly better on the high intensity training (HIT) centre, where there was a structured and individualised regime. Aspects of race relations procedures needed strengthening.

There had been some improvement in the delivery and quality of education and training, with a greater focus on employability and resettlement. It was disappointing, however, that only 13 young prisoners worked outside the establishment, and that the balance of activities did not meet demand, with long waiting lists for some courses and jobs.

The prison's resettlement work needed to be refocused, following its change of role. The offender management model was not working well, and there was no formal management of short-sentenced prisoners, an increasing proportion of the population. The HIT scheme and its attached independent living unit did provide an integrated and supportive resettlement programme, but only for a minority of young men. Family support work also needed to increase.

Overall, Thorn Cross remains a high-performing young offender institution. However, it is now dealing with a more varied population, without the dedicated resources previously provided for juveniles. It will need to ensure that it strengthens its resettlement work, to provide the best possible support for an age group that has a very high risk of reoffending.

Anne Owers
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

October 2008

Fact page

Task of the establishment

Thorn Cross holds young male adults aged 18–25 in open conditions.

Area organisation

North West

Number held

225

Certified normal accommodation

322

Operational capacity

232

Last inspection

Full inspection: 18-22 April 2005

Brief history

Thorn Cross opened in December 1985 as an open youth custody centre on a former Royal Naval Air Station site, which had been converted into an open prison for adults after the war. It held juveniles until May 2008 when it was re-roled to take young adults aged 18–25. It now operates regimes for young adults aged 18–21, adults aged 21–25, and the high intensity training (HIT) centre, which opened in July 1996.

Description of residential units

Unit one: 18–21 year olds

Unit two: 18–21 year olds, mandatory drug testing unit

Unit three: 21–25 year olds, induction unit

Unit four: 21–25 year olds

Unit five: 18–21 year olds, high intensity training (HIT) centre

Section 1: Healthy prison assessment

Introduction

HP1 The purpose of this inspection was to follow up the recommendations made in our last full inspection of 2005 and examine progress achieved. We have commented where we have found significant improvements and where we believe little or no progress has been made and work remained to be done. All inspection reports include a summary of an establishment's performance against the model of a healthy prison. The four criteria of a healthy prison are:

Safety	prisoners, even the most vulnerable, are held safely
Respect	prisoners are treated with respect for their human dignity
Purposeful activity	prisoners are able, and expected, to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them
Resettlement	prisoners are prepared for their release into the community and helped to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

HP2 Under each test, we make an assessment of outcomes for prisoners and therefore of the establishment's overall performance against the test. In some cases, this performance will be affected by matters outside the establishment's direct control, which need to be addressed by the National Offender Management Service.

...performing well against this healthy prison test.

There is no evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in any significant areas.

...performing reasonably well against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence of adverse outcomes for prisoners in only a small number of areas. For the majority, there are no significant concerns.

...not performing sufficiently well against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in many areas or particularly in those areas of greatest importance to the well being of prisoners. Problems/concerns, if left unattended, are likely to become areas of serious concern.

...performing poorly against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence that the outcomes for prisoners are seriously affected by current practice. There is a failure to ensure even adequate treatment of and/or conditions for prisoners. Immediate remedial action is required.

HP3 This Inspectorate conducts unannounced follow-up inspections to assess progress against recommendations made in the previous full inspection. Follow-up inspections are proportionate to risk. Short follow-up inspections are conducted where the previous full inspection and our intelligence systems suggest that there are comparatively fewer concerns. Sufficient inspector time is allocated to enable

inspection of progress and, where necessary, to note additional areas of concern observed by inspectors. Inspectors draw up a brief healthy prison summary setting out the progress of the establishment in the areas inspected. From the evidence available they also concluded whether this progress confirmed or required amendment of the healthy prison assessment held by the Inspectorate on all establishments but only published since early 2004.

Safety

- HP4 In 2005 we assessed the prison as performing well against this healthy prison test, and made 34 recommendations. In this short follow-up inspection, we found that the prison had achieved 16 of these recommendations, partially achieved six and not implemented four. Eight recommendations were no longer relevant because of the prison's recent change of function and the loss of its juvenile population.
- HP5 Thorn Cross received prisoners aged 18–25 from across the North West and West Midlands. Many had progressed through their sentence and were arriving from young adult and adult training establishments. There were no concerns about their transfer, although there were now arrivals throughout the week rather than on a set day, as previously. Transfers were planned appropriately.
- HP6 Relationships between reception staff and new arrivals were respectful, and correct assessments took place. Health screening normally took place in the healthcare centre. The strip searching cubicles had improved and were now satisfactory. Prisoners were processed through reception without undue delays.
- HP7 There was no first night centre and new arrivals were allocated directly to their residential units. They usually had a comprehensive induction interview on their unit and appropriate risk assessments were completed, but the approach to this varied. New arrivals were identified in unit offices and an observation sheet was opened on them for their first night. Peer mentors introduced themselves to new prisoners.
- HP8 The induction programme lasted half a week and began on Monday or Wednesday, which meant a delay for new prisoners who arrived on Thursdays. The content of the induction was good, and included a talk from the police liaison officer on the consequences of absconding. Induction on the high intensity training (HIT) centre lasted longer and was more intensive and consistent with the programme's needs.
- HP9 The violence reduction policy needed revision following the recent changes to the population (the prison had lost its juvenile population, and instead held some 21 to 25 year olds). The safer custody manager led the management of violence reduction, and there were well-attended weekly violence reduction meetings. The incidence of bullying was low, but the prison's survey of bullying confirmed that this issue needed to be continually addressed and monitored. There were interventions for bullies and victims, and some aspects of these were good. The quality of investigations into bullying incidents was inconsistent.
- HP10 The suicide and self-harm reduction strategy was led by the safer custody manager and addressed principally through the monthly safer custody meeting, which oversaw a clear suicide and self-harm reduction policy. Only eight self-harm monitoring documents had been opened in 2008 to date. These were completed to a high standard and showed good quality multidisciplinary monitoring of prisoners. A team of

peer mentors effectively replicated the usual Listeners approach in a scheme devised by the NSPCC and Child Line.

- HP11 A small but effective security department managed security proportionately. There had been an increase in security information reports since the juvenile population had been replaced by 21–25 year olds, but this was said to be the result of greater awareness of security issues. There had been considerable work to address the problem of absconding, including the decision to prosecute all absconders, and there had been a substantial drop in incidents.
- HP12 The care and separation (segregation) unit had four designated segregation cells and 10 other rooms used as an overflow. At the time of our inspection, there were no prisoners in the unit, which was little used and then usually for short stays only. The back records indicated that record keeping was weak, and showed that all prisoners located on the unit were strip searched without proper risk assessment.
- HP13 There were about 22 adjudications a week. Tariffs were reviewed and published, but some allegations were not fully investigated. There was a minor report system on the units holding young adults, which appeared to be applied proportionately.
- HP14 There had been 15 use of force incidents in 2008 to date, but only four had involved the use of control and restraint, which was low. Record keeping and accountability were good, and we were assured that force was used only as a last resort.
- HP15 The prison had no capacity to support drug detoxification or maintenance and those in need were transferred to another establishment. A random mandatory drug testing figure of about 6.7% was recorded, which, alongside suspicion test data, suggested access to drugs was comparatively low.
- HP16 We were satisfied that the prison continued to perform well against this healthy prison test.

Respect

- HP17 In 2005 we assessed the prison as performing well against this healthy prison test but made 39 recommendations. In this short follow-up inspection, we found that 20 recommendations had been achieved, nine partially achieved and nine were not achieved. One recommendation was no longer relevant.
- HP18 The quality of the environment was generally good, although variable, and we found a large amount of graffiti on the residential units. The quality of the cells varied, although many were of a good standard. Standards of cleanliness generally were acceptable. The outdoor environment was excellent. There were sufficient phones for prisoners, and the cleanliness of showers was acceptable. Washing machines were available on each unit, but only prisoners who worked outside the prison could wear their own clothes. The electricity was turned off during the day and at night on some units.
- HP19 There were two incentives and earned privileges (IEP) schemes, one for the HIT centre and one for the main prison. Both were based on a points system, although the means to lose points were clearer than those to gain them. We were unclear why separate IEP systems were necessary. The differential benefits between standard

and enhanced levels were not great, although prisoners were keen to become enhanced.

- HP20 Staff-prisoner relationships were generally good. Prisoners were mostly positive about staff attitudes, and we observed a relaxed and respectful level of engagement. However, not all staff addressed prisoners by their preferred name, and some prisoners complained that some staff treated them as children.
- HP21 There was a personal officer scheme, which was particularly well established on the HIT centre. There were features of the HIT scheme that could have been extended to the rest of the prison. Personal officers seemed helpful and supportive, but the depth of engagement was limited. Entries in unit files were dominated by IEP comments, and did not present an all-round view of the individual prisoner.
- HP22 The quality of food was more than acceptable, and prisoners were generally positive about the meals. Standards of cleanliness in the kitchen appeared good, with standards in the serveries acceptable. Meals were served at appropriate times and prisoners were able to dine in association. The management of food complaints books was poor. The prison shop was run by Aramark, and the system of bagged orders worked reasonably well.
- HP23 There was no overarching diversity policy, and there had been no diversity manager in post for some time. Wheelchair access was good, and there was some evidence that the needs of prisoners with disabilities would be addressed. The promotion of other aspects of diversity, such as sexual orientation, was less well developed.
- HP24 About 20% of prisoners were from a black or minority ethnic background. The race equality action team (REAT) met regularly, was well attended and included two prisoner representatives. It was supported by a separate meeting of prisoner race equality representatives, which provided inclusivity in the management of race equality. However, the race equality officer (REO) was only allowed the minimum eight hours per week. The management of the racist incident reporting system needed to improve. Administration arrangements were unclear and the quality of some investigations was poor. The REO did, however, consult with prisoners about general issues raised in racist incident reports.
- HP25 There were no foreign national prisoners at the time of our inspection. There was no foreign national policy and no identified management lead for this area.
- HP26 Prisoners had made 248 complaints in 2008 to date, which was high for the size of the population. Data on complaints was collected, but analysis of trends was limited. Some responses to complaints were unhelpful and evasive, and quality assurance of responses needed development. Applications were managed inconsistently. There was no legal service support for prisoners.
- HP27 There was one full-time coordinating chaplain supported by a team of part-time and sessional chaplains. Chaplaincy facilities, including the multi-faith room, were of a good standard. The chaplaincy offered a range of faith-based provision, as well as religious services, was fully integrated into the life of the prison, and made a full and valued contribution.

- HP28 Provision for healthcare was good. Prisoners were properly assessed by a small but well-qualified team. Clinical governance structures and the skill mix were good, and healthcare staff was responsive to the needs of prisoners.
- HP29 We concluded that Thorn Cross continued to perform well against this healthy prison test.

Purposeful activity

- HP30 In 2005 we concluded that the prison was performing reasonably well against this healthy prison test and made 12 recommendations for improvement. Of these, seven were achieved and five partially achieved.
- HP31 About 85 prisoners were engaged in education. A head of learning and skills had been appointed, and there had been improvements in the delivery of learning and skills and the strategic direction set. There was a greater emphasis on developing prisoners' employability and supporting resettlement. The use of data to plan and monitor learning had improved, and quality improvement arrangements were better. Prisoners could access learning in literacy and numeracy in the workplace settings as well as the classroom. Individual support was available for the relatively few prisoners seeking qualifications at level three. The curriculum was under review to reflect the needs of the re-roled population.
- HP32 There were 11 vocational workshops covering nine trades, including construction, motor vehicle maintenance, industrial cleaning and waste management. However, there was still insufficient vocational training to meet demand, and waiting lists for construction crafts, in particular, were long. There were 86 prisoners in vocational training and work, and 13 prisoners worked in employment outside the prison.
- HP33 There was no librarian at the time of our inspection. The library had developed links with the education department, and there were plans to extend opening hours under a revised library contract. The most recent library use data indicated satisfactory access by prisoners. Book stock was adequate and well maintained. A small selection of audio books had been purchased, but had not yet been catalogued or advertised.
- HP34 Access to the gym was good. There had been some increase in the number of accredited courses, but a decline in retention rates on these. Curriculum development had been good, and there was a range of courses with clear progression routes to level two. The gym had benefited from investment and had good facilities.
- HP35 The prison recorded a time out of room figure of 12.5 hours per day, well in excess of our expectation of 10 hours, and this was a broadly accurate assessment of the experience of prisoners. Prisoners were rarely locked in their room, although there were some restrictions on their movement in the evening and at lunchtime. Association was hardly ever cancelled.
- HP36 We concluded that Thorn Cross continued to perform reasonably well against this healthy prison test.

Resettlement

- HP37 In 2005 we judged that Thorn Cross was performing well against this healthy prison test. We made seven recommendations, of which one was achieved, two partially achieved and four were not achieved.
- HP38 The prison had a good strategy to address the reduction of reoffending, which focused on the resettlement pathways. However, the strategy and most recent resettlement needs analysis needed to be updated following the change of role. Structures to manage resettlement were satisfactory.
- HP39 We had concerns about some aspects of offender management and sentence planning. Offender supervisors had been embedded in the residential units, but it was clear the model was not working and the quality of supervision had slipped. There was a strong focus on prisoners with risk issues, and offender assessment system (OASys) documents were generally completed. However, there was poorer sentence management for short-term prisoners, an increasing proportion of the population.
- HP40 Four staff had been trained to offer housing advice, and 95% of prisoners were discharged to an address. Jobcentre Plus staff attended the prison twice weekly to assist with benefit queries, but there was little else to address finance and debt issues.
- HP41 Education and training provision supported the work on resettlement. The education department was working to improve the information, advice and guidance on offer to new arrivals on induction and in follow-up. There was a range of training opportunities to support employability. A short 'job ready' course had recently been introduced for shorter term prisoners. Some prisoners had been able to undertake employment placements as part of their resettlement.
- HP42 There were satisfactory arrangements to address the health needs of prisoners before their release, and the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATs) team provided one-to-one support and some groupwork for prisoners with drugs issues.
- HP43 Access to visits had recently increased with the addition of a weekday session. However, visits lasted only an hour, which was insufficient, particularly with the increase in prisoners from the West Midlands. The education department ran a family links course aimed at young fathers, and family days were organised at routine intervals. Reasonable access to town visits and release on temporary licence were also important components of this work.
- HP44 The prison operated the drugs short duration programme and also ran as many as 12 enhanced thinking skills courses a year. The coordination of access to offending behaviour work with other regime elements required improvement.
- HP45 The establishment continued to run the high intensity training (HIT) programme, providing a structured and disciplined environment. This continued to provide significant individual resettlement assistance for young adults at high risk of reoffending. Before release, they could move to the independent living unit and take up jobs in the community, some of which became permanent.

HP46 Because of the weaknesses identified in the quality of offender supervision and sentence planning, we felt unable to award our highest marking. However, we judged that the prison was still performing reasonably well on resettlement.

Section 2: Progress since the last report

The paragraph reference number at the end of each recommendation below refers to its location in the previous inspection report.

Recommendations that applied to the establishment's previous juvenile population are marked as 'no longer relevant'.

Main recommendations (from the previous report)

- 2.1 **Juveniles should be strip-searched only after a risk assessment and only by staff who have had child protection training. (HP54)**

No longer relevant.

- 2.2 **There should be social visits on some midweek days and evenings in addition to the existing weekend arrangements. (HP55)**

Partially achieved. An additional one-hour visit session had been introduced on Wednesday evening, but was only available to prisoners who had arrived in the previous week or who were on the enhanced level of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme. Fewer visitors attended these sessions than the weekend visits, but new arrivals appreciated the opportunity for them, and they were believed to have contributed to the reduction in the number of prisoners who absconded during their first days. There were plans to introduce a further visits session on Friday evenings. Refreshments were not available for visitors on Wednesday evenings.

Further recommendations

- 2.3 Evening visits should be available to all prisoners whatever their incentives and earned privileges (IEP) status.
- 2.4 Refreshments should be available for visitors on evening visits.

- 2.5 **The management of learning and skills should be improved and the role of the head of learning and skills clarified. (HP56)**

Achieved. An effective head of learning and skills (HOLS) had been in post since early 2007. His job description was clearly defined, and the role was accountable to the Governor. The impact of the work of the HOLS was reflected in progress reports and improvements in learning and skills provision.

Recommendation

To the Director General

- 2.6 **The Prison Service should issue a national directive that all staff coming into contact with children should have retrospective enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks carried out. (3.31)**

No longer relevant.

Recommendation

To the Youth Justice Board

- 2.7 The adult-oriented practices and procedures of mandatory drug testing are not appropriate for juveniles and should be abolished. (8.79)

No longer relevant.

Recommendations

To the Governor

Courts, escorts and transfers

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

- 2.8 The number and frequency of transfers and escorts to Thorn Cross had increased recently, and prisoners now arrived on all days during the week. However, as all new arrivals were sentenced, such moves were invariably planned.
- 2.9 All prisoners we spoke to had come from other establishments in the North West and Midlands, and said their journeys were relatively short and uneventful. Most receptions occurred in the late morning or early afternoon, and late arrivals were rare.

First days in custody

- 2.10 Strip-search cubicles in the main reception should be properly screened. (1.19)

Achieved. The number of strip search cubicles had been reduced to three larger cubicles, with doors that offered suitable privacy. Only two of these were used; the third was used as a store area and had a shower, although this was never used.

- 2.11 Night staff on the young adult units should record all contact with new arrivals. (1.20)

Partially achieved. There were no dedicated first night facilities, and all new arrivals were allocated to their unit directly from reception. Each unit had first night observation sheets, which day or night staff completed, depending on when the prisoner arrived. The quality of information varied. Some files demonstrated good staff engagement with new arrivals and useful insight into their needs, while others were more perfunctory (see paragraph 2.15). Recent new arrivals told us that they had been interviewed on their first night and had found staff helpful.

- 2.12 The establishment should ensure that juveniles are fully occupied during induction and keep the content and delivery of the programme under continual review. (1.21)

No longer relevant.

- 2.13 The format of the induction evaluation sheets should be reviewed and made simpler to complete and the results properly analysed to inform course content. (1.22)

Achieved. The induction evaluation sheets had been revised and now included tick-box sections and space for comments – although comments were rare. We looked at 100 sheets for the previous three months and only five contained comments. Senior officers on the high intensity training (HIT) centre and unit three (induction) looked at the sheets, and the programmes were regularly updated and revised.

Additional information

- 2.14 Thorn Cross now accepted new arrivals on any weekday, rather than just Mondays and Wednesdays as previously, and receptions had increased to an average of 75 a month since April 2008. The reception system was efficient, with permanent reception staff who also managed prisoners being released or going out on temporary licence.
- 2.15 First night arrangements on all units included prisoner access to unit-based mentors, staff completion of observation sheets, and interviews that covered the individual's background, needs and expectations. The forms used and quality of completion varied between the units. Staff on units one, two and three used basic forms, which were attached to unit files. Unit four had developed its own, more comprehensive, assessment tool. Unit five, incorporating the HIT programme, also used its own forms, which included a questionnaire about the needs of the individual that was sent to parents or carers. These good practices had not been shared across the units to develop a consistent model of first night assessments.
- 2.16 Induction was based on unit three (or five for the HIT programme), and young adults under 21 and prisoners between 21 and 25 attended together. The main programme had recently been reduced to two and a half days, and started on Mondays and Wednesdays. Although this meant that prisoners who arrived on a Thursday had to wait until Monday to start induction, information was available on the units and most new arrivals had been in custody elsewhere. The content of the induction programme was appropriate, and the recent inclusion of a talk from the police liaison officer appeared to have had a significant positive effect on absconding rates. The programme on the HIT centre lasted a fortnight and reflected the specific needs of that population.

Further recommendation

- 2.17 There should be a consistent model of assessment and first night observation on all units, based on current best practice.

Residential units

- 2.18 **Showers should have privacy screens. (2.13)**
- Achieved.** The showers in the shower blocks on all units had individual privacy screens.
- 2.19 **The establishment should ensure that essential maintenance and repairs are carried out on an ongoing basis. (2.14)**
- Achieved.** Staff logged all repairs required, and these were usually undertaken within two days, although there were sometimes delays.
- 2.20 **Wing cleaners should receive adequate training and protective clothing. (2.15)**
- Not achieved.** Each unit had identified cleaners. Information on their role and tasks was available on the units, but this was not specifically covered with prisoners undertaking the roles. Cleaners were given no protective clothing except for polythene gloves, which not all of them wore. They tended to wear their dirty day-to-day clothes to undertake tasks.
We repeat the recommendation.

2.21 The establishment should implement its offensive displays policy. (2.16)

Achieved. Prisoners had a reasonable understanding of the offensive displays policy, and staff ensured that it was adhered to. We saw examples where incentives and earned privileges (IEP) warnings had been made or points docked for breaches of the policy.

2.22 There should be robust checks to maintain the standard of cleanliness of the toilet facilities and washbasins. (2.17)

Partially achieved. Staff checked the landing toilets and washbasins at least daily. The standard of cleanliness was generally reasonable, except on unit one, where most toilet areas were badly defaced by graffiti. Attempts to remove this had been ineffective.

Further recommendation

2.23 Graffiti on units, particular in toilet areas, should be removed, and staff should monitor prisoners for such behaviour.

2.24 All young people should be allowed to wear their own clothes. (2.18)

Not achieved. Only prisoners working out or on temporary release were able to wear their own clothes. Prisoners were expected to wear prison-issue clothing at all other times.
We repeat the recommendation.

2.25 Young people should be allowed to receive property that is properly processed through the visits system. (2.19)

Not achieved. Although there was good management of the volume of property that prisoners could hold in line with the IEP scheme, they were unable to have property handed in during visits and could only hand items out with the Governor's approval. As a consequence, prisoners had to buy items required through a catalogue, which was expensive and a source of many complaints from prisoners during the inspection.
We repeat the recommendation.

Additional information

2.26 All accommodation, except the independent living unit on the HIT centre, was single room and prisoners had their own courtesy key. The general standard of cleanliness was reasonable, but varied between units. Some communal areas on units one and two had been defaced by graffiti, which diminished the general impression of the environment, especially in contrast to the well-maintained outside grounds.

2.27 Most residential rooms were reasonable, but also varied. Prisoners on units one and two could put up wallpaper to make the environment more pleasant, but rooms without this looked bare and were marked where posters and pictures had been up. Rooms on units three and four had pin boards to display pictures. The general standard of rooms on the HIT centre was high. All units had sufficient phones and recreational facilities, including table tennis and pool, and washing machines.

2.28 Until juveniles had left Thorn Cross, electricity on all units had been turned off during the day – when most prisoners were at work or education – and after midnight. Since then, units three

and four, which held adults between 21 and 25, had electricity on permanently, but it was still switched off on units one, two and five.

- 2.29 The independent living unit (part of the high intensity training centre) accommodated up to 24 prisoners – 12 during the week who went home at weekends, and 12 who worked out and lived at home during the week and returned to Thorn Cross at the weekends. At the time of the inspection, there were 10 prisoners in the centre. Bedrooms were doubled, and prisoners were encouraged to budget, clean and cook for themselves.

Further recommendations

- 2.30 All residential rooms should have notice boards for prisoner displays.
- 2.31 Electricity should not be switched off on any of the units.

Staff-prisoner relationships

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

Additional information

- 2.32 In 2005, we found good staff-prisoner relationships, and this remained the case. The prison had a relaxed atmosphere, with positive and constructive engagement between staff and prisoners. We often saw staff talking to prisoners, and prisoners were generally positive about staff attitudes towards them. Some of the recently arrived older prisoners did raise concerns that staff sometimes spoke to them as if they were children. Senior staff accepted that the prison might need to address this issue. The prison was planning to introduce staff training in pro-social modelling, which could further good relationships. Not all staff addressed prisoners by their preferred names or titles.

Personal officers

- 2.33 **The establishment should review the personal officer scheme and set this out in a formal policy which specifies the responsibilities of staff and managers. (2.29)**

Achieved. The personal officer scheme had been reviewed and revised in 2007, and a policy and staff guidance document were in place. The document gave basic guidance to staff about their role with the prisoners for whom they were responsible.

- 2.34 **Personal officers should receive training in the sentence planning procedures used for the young people in their care. (2.30)**

Partially achieved. The implementation of the personal officer scheme varied between the units. Personal officers on unit five, the HIT centre, took an active role in the development of objectives for prisoners and worked closely with other departments. The centre had its own offender manager, who helped to maintain the high profile of sentence planning and management. Staff on unit four had had extensive training in working with the previous juvenile population and developing training plans. Personal officers had a good understanding of the general needs of their prisoners, and unit files reflected a good level of interaction. Although the personal officer scheme was in place on units one, two and three, the level of engagement by staff was primarily orientated to everyday matters rather than sentence planning and

resettlement issues.

We repeat the recommendation.

- 2.35 **Residential managers should ensure that the duties of personal officers are being carried out appropriately and make regular quality checks. (2.31)**

Partially achieved. The unit files that we reviewed showed evidence of regular checks by managers. These were marked and signed by the senior officer, but there were no comments, and there was no consistent quality control system for all the units. Managers raised issues such as completion of forms with staff, rather than the quality and effectiveness of their engagement with prisoners.

Further recommendation

- 2.36 The regular quality checks by managers of personal officer entries in unit files should use criteria that cover the effectiveness of their engagement with prisoners.

Additional information

- 2.37 Prisoners we spoke to were aware of who their personal officer was, although views about their role varied. Generally, they were positive about the staff, and saw their personal officer as the first point of contact if they had a problem.
- 2.38 In most cases, comments by personal officers in prisoner files were oriented to the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme, and usually indicated that the prisoner lost IEP points on a regular basis. There were fewer comments about their positive behaviour.

Further recommendation

- 2.39 Personal officer engagement with prisoners and comments in their files should be oriented towards wider sentence planning and resettlement needs and less focused on negative behaviour under the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme.

Bullying and violence reduction

- 2.40 **The psychology department should be integrated within the anti-bullying strategy. (3.9)**

Achieved. Staff from the psychology department had been present at two of the previous five meetings of the safer custody committee. They had also completed the analysis of a bullying survey in 2007, and presented the findings and recommendations to the safer custody committee (see paragraph 2.49). The psychology department also provided one-to-one support for bullies and victims, as required.

- 2.41 **The arrangements for gathering information about bullying among young adults should be improved. (3.10)**

Achieved. In addition to monthly meetings of the safer custody committee (see paragraph 2.43), there was a weekly violence reduction meeting chaired by the head of safer custody or a governor grade. Attendees included representatives from security, residential units, the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATs), healthcare and

the chaplaincy. These meetings discussed any prisoners who gave cause for concern. This included identified bullies and their victims, as well as prisoners on self-harm monitoring, vulnerable prisoners and any on the basic regime. Public protection cases were also discussed. The meeting we attended was a good forum for raising staff awareness and sharing key information. Unit observation books were also collected daily and any new entries photocopied for scrutiny by the security department. This was an effective method of collating bullying-related information that had not otherwise been reported.

2.42 The anti-bullying committee should examine ways in which some of the good practices operating on the juvenile side might be transferred to work with young adults. (3.11)

Partially achieved. At our last inspection, there had been a significant variance in the quality of arrangements for juveniles and young adults. These included a video about bullying that was shown to new juvenile arrivals. There was nothing similar for young adults and, since the change in population, the video was no longer shown. New arrivals were briefed on all aspects of safer custody as part of their induction, and were also supported by peer mentors (see paragraph 2.59). These arrangements were satisfactory. CCTV, which had only been installed on the juvenile unit at the last inspection, was now installed on units one and two as well as unit four (previously the juvenile unit). These cameras helped reinforce prisoners' feelings of safety. The counselling for bullies and victims previously available for the juvenile population had been retained.

Additional information

- 2.43** The monthly safer custody committee meeting managed arrangements for anti-bullying and violence reduction. These meetings were chaired by the full-time safer custody manager and were well attended, although there had been no prisoner representation for some time. In addition to the safer custody manager, a new part-time senior officer post with 20 hours a week facility time for this work was due to start the week after the inspection. There was also administrative support.
- 2.44** A violence reduction policy document outlined the anti-bullying procedures. This policy had not yet been updated to take account of the change in population, although this had been identified by the establishment.
- 2.45** Until May 2008, information relating to bullying and violence was collated by an officer and presented to the safer custody committee. This information included guilty findings at adjudication for fights, assault and threatening behaviour, as well as prisoners monitored for bullying. These prisoners were put forward to attend a violence reduction workshop, which had been designed by Child Line, which had trained staff to present them. These arrangements had lapsed in May 2008 when the officer had left his post, but were planned to recommence under the new senior officer post.
- 2.46** Other interventions for bullies and victims included an extensive range of counselling services and one-to-one work with psychology staff, as well as an area-accredited anger management course.
- 2.47** There had been 29 bullying-related security information reports in 2008 to date. The unit manager normally investigated a bullying incident report. Each unit had its own bullying register, and 12 bully monitoring documents had been opened since the start of 2008 (not including any for juveniles before the change in population). We were not satisfied that all alleged incidents had been properly investigated. Arrangements for closed monitoring documents were haphazard. A senior officer on unit one collated those for units one to three,

unit five retained its own, and unit four had not opened any at the time of inspection. These documents needed to be collated centrally and quality assured as the standard of completion was variable.

- 2.48 Prisoners placed on stage two of the anti-bullying scheme were required to complete a workbook with staff assistance. These books were designed to help them understand bullying and victim issues. Although a good idea, the completed workbooks that we reviewed were very poor, and we were not satisfied that staff gave prisoners enough support to complete them.
- 2.49 The 2007 bullying survey had been carefully analysed by psychology staff. Seventeen per cent of young adult respondents reported that they had been physically bullied once or twice at Thorn Cross, and 36% verbally bullied once or twice. These findings confirmed that there was bullying, and procedures needed to be tightened up to reflect this.

Further recommendations

- 2.50 There should be prisoner representatives on the safer custody committee.
- 2.51 The violence reduction policy document should be updated to reflect the changes in population.
- 2.52 The violence reduction workshops should recommence.
- 2.53 All incidents of alleged bullying should be fully investigated.
- 2.54 The quality of bully monitoring booklets should be monitored closely and quality checked on completion.
- 2.55 Staff should assist identified bullies to complete workbooks to ensure that learning points are understood and reinforced.

Self-harm and suicide

- 2.56 **The governor should attempt to rebuild relationships with the Samaritans in order to reintroduce a Listener's scheme as soon as possible. (3.19)**

Partially achieved. At the time of the last inspection, relationships between the establishment and the local branch of the Samaritans had broken down, and the Samaritans had withdrawn from the establishment and refused to attend further meetings. As a result, the Listener scheme could no longer be supported. Although the establishment had re-established relationships with the Samaritans, it had decided against reintroducing a Listener scheme – as the Samaritans were unable to meet the training commitment necessary to sustain this. Instead, it opted for a peer mentor scheme (see paragraph 2.59), whose responsibilities encompassed those usually found for Insiders and Listeners. Prisoners were still able to contact the Samaritans through the phone system or mobile Samaritans phones available on each unit.

Additional information

- 2.57 All arrangements for suicide and self-harm prevention were managed through the safer custody committee (see paragraph 2.43). Procedures were explained in a comprehensive and clear policy document, which had been reviewed in May 2008.
- 2.58 The assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) self-harm monitoring system had been implemented two years previously. There had been a high level of staff training before implementation, and some refresher training. Eight ACCT documents had been opened since the start of 2008, four following acts of self-harm; this included one opened during the inspection. We reviewed four documents. Their quality was generally good, care maps were meaningful, and many monitoring entries showed evidence of positive engagement by staff. There was also clear evidence of a multidisciplinary approach to the care of the prisoner at risk. In all cases, peer supporters had been used. The safer custody committee fully discussed all prisoners on open ACCTs.
- 2.59 The peer mentor scheme had been devised by Child Line and the NSPCC, who trained staff from Thorn Cross to deliver the training. Mentors also received follow-up training in listening skills from the Samaritans. In total 75 prisoners had been trained, and the establishment aimed for a minimum of four mentors on each unit. Mentors signed a confidentiality contract and had responsibility for supporting new arrivals and those in need of additional support. They were well publicised on the units, wore black T-shirts, had regular minuted meetings, and were routinely used to support prisoners on open ACCT documents. In some of the ACCT documents we reviewed, there were records of very positive comments from prisoners about the support from mentors. All mentor contacts with prisoners were recorded for monitoring purposes. We spoke to two mentors and were impressed with their enthusiasm. Overall, we were satisfied that the peer mentor scheme had sufficient rigor and governance, and met the needs of the population.
- 2.60 Anti-ligature knives had been issued to night staff but, despite approval, had not been issued to day staff. While anti-ligature knives were available on each unit, all staff needed personal issue knives to ensure that they could respond appropriately to any attempted ligaturing.

Further recommendation

- 2.61 All staff should have personal issue anti-ligature knives.

Child protection

Three recommendations made under this heading were no longer relevant.

Additional information

- 2.62 Before the change in population, there was a full-time head of safeguarding manager and a monthly safeguarding meeting. Following the loss of juveniles, the manager's job title and that of the committee had been changed to reflect their safer custody role.
- 2.63 There were child protection arrangements for visits. Any concerns were passed on to security and visits staff, and visits were more closely monitored as necessary. These arrangements worked well.

Diversity

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

- 2.64 The prison had been without a diversity manager for over a year, but it had recently been decided that the race equality officer should take on the task. The equal opportunities policy largely related to staff and was not sufficiently focused on the diversity needs of prisoners. There was a disability policy, and all parts of the prison were accessible to prisoners with mobility needs. Healthcare staff carried out disability assessments on new arrivals, and communicated relevant mobility needs to fire officers to ensure appropriate support in the event of an evacuation. Senior managers had attempted to discuss diversity issues at recent meetings of the prisoner consultative committee.
- 2.65 The recent changes to the prisoner population had resulted in some age-related issues, including the switching off of electricity for young adults (see paragraph 2.28) and complaints from several prisoners that staff treated them as children (see paragraph 2.32).

Further recommendations

- 2.66 The prison should draw up a diversity policy, appoint a diversity manager, survey prisoners about their diversity needs and promote all aspects of diversity among prisoners.
- 2.67 The prison should ensure that there is equity in access to facilities.

Race equality

- 2.68 **The establishment should involve the imam in race relations meetings. (3.43)**

Partially achieved. The Muslim chaplain had been invited to the monthly race equality action team meetings, but had not attended the previous three meetings.

Further recommendation

- 2.69 There should be greater efforts to involve the Muslim chaplain in the race equality action team.

- 2.70 **Ethnic monitoring should be extended to reflect black and minority ethnic young people's attainment results on the high intensity training programme. (3.44)**

Not achieved. There was no separate reporting of black and minority ethnic prisoners on the high intensity training programme to ascertain their progress. The prison only applied ethnic monitoring to the standard range of key activities.

We repeat the recommendation.

- 2.71 **Young people should be given written notification of the outcomes of racist incident complaints (3.45)**

Achieved. All prisoners and staff who submitted racist incident forms were given written feedback that detailed the outcome of the incident. They also signed this form to indicate receipt. The paperwork was filed with the racist incident forms.

Additional information

- 2.72 The black and minority ethnic population was 20%. The race equality officer was given only eight hours facility time per week for this work, and was about to take on the role of diversity manager. No other staff were designated to support this role. There was a race equality policy and a race equality action team (REAT) met regularly. There were race equality prisoner representatives for all units who met before the REAT and identified issues for two designated prisoner representatives to take to the main meeting. These representatives had not had race equality training.
- 2.73 Staff and prisoners had submitted 22 racist incident forms in the current year, which appeared relatively low. Most investigations were completed within a short timescale but several had taken several months to conclude. The quality of the investigations was satisfactory, but the process for countersigning appeared perfunctory and did not identify areas of good practice or for improvement. There was no external quality assurance of racist incident forms. Cases referred for adjudication were not cross-referenced to the relevant paperwork.
- 2.74 If prisoners had a racially aggravated offence on their criminal record, or if cell sharing forms indicated racist views, the REO interviewed them and advised them of the requirements of the race equality policy and required standards of behaviour by prisoners.

Further recommendations

- 2.75 There should be more facility time for race equality work, including support for the race equality officer.
- 2.76 Prisoner race equality representatives should receive relevant training.
- 2.77 Completed racist incident forms should be quality assured externally.
- 2.78 Adjudications that result from racist behaviour should be cross-referenced appropriately.

Good practice

- 2.79 *The race equality officer advised prisoners with records of racially aggravated offences or racist views of the requirements of the race equality policy and the prison's required standards of behaviour.*
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Foreign national prisoners

- 2.80 The establishment should produce and implement a foreign nationals policy. (3.49)

Not achieved. The prison had not developed a foreign national policy and there was no designated member of staff responsible for foreign national issues. Although there were no foreign national prisoners at the time of the inspection, the prison was complacent about this issue.

We repeat the recommendation.

Applications and complaints

- 2.81 The 'trainee centre consultative committee' model should be reviewed and revised. (3.74)

Achieved. The trainee centre consultative committee had recently been relaunched and was scheduled to meet monthly. The role of the committee and the prisoner representatives was being looked at to establish the best use of the forum.

- 2.82 The written information about applications and complaints should be available in other mediums, such as on tape, to make it accessible to poor readers. (3.75)

Achieved. Information on the application and complaints system was widely advertised across the prison and posted on all unit notice boards. Information was provided during induction and included in information given to new arrivals. It was also available on a CD for prisoners with poor literacy. Unit staff helped prisoners with poor literacy to make an application and/or complaint. Information on the application and complaints system was available in a range of language, although non-English speaking prisoners were rare.

- 2.83 There should be regular analysis and quality assurance of complaints to identify emerging patterns or trends and to improve practice. (3.76)

Not achieved. There had been 248 complaints submitted in 2008 to date. Although complaints were logged and a database monitored the efficiency of responses, there was no quality control system. There were no regular reports to examine patterns of complaints, no regular evaluation of a sample of complaints, and no senior manager had overall responsibility to ensure that responses were appropriate, respectful or accurate. We looked at 59 complaints submitted in the previous month. Although most responses were appropriate and considered, five (9%) did not answer the query or gave unsatisfactory answers.

We repeat the recommendation.

Additional information

- 2.84 The application system was not applied consistently by units. Most units used a general application system, but unit one used a range of specific applications. However, all units used the governor's application system, in which specific requests were placed in a book on the unit for response from the duty governor during their daily rounds. There was no quality control of this system, and no analysis of the subjects raised and the primary issues. Governors varied in their responses to requests, and responses were not dated so it was difficult to know how quickly such requests were responded to.

Further recommendations

- 2.85 Quality control should be introduced for governor's applications.
- 2.86 Governors should date their responses to applications.
- 2.87 There should be a consistent system for applications throughout the establishment.

Legal rights

- 2.88 Juveniles admitted to the establishment direct from court should receive equivalent legal services as young adults. (3.83).

No longer relevant.

Additional information

- 2.89 There was no legal services officer or provision to support prisoners. We were told that the Prison Service procedures had sanctioned this lack of a legal services officer under the standards audit arrangements.

Further recommendation

- 2.90 There should be a trained legal services officer.

Substance use

- 2.91 **Mandatory drug testing should consistently include weekend testing. (8.78)**

Achieved. Mandatory drug testing (MDT) was a profiled activity on weekdays, but not at weekends as the numbers were small. The testing log books showed that there was consistent testing at weekends, and targets were met on all but a few occasions. The random MDT rate was around 6.7%, which, when considered alongside the suspicion test data, which also showed a low number of positive tests, suggested that access to drugs was comparatively low.

Additional information

- 2.92 The prison did not offer a detoxification programme and did not have capacity to support prisoners on drug maintenance programmes. We were told that prisoners who required such services were not accepted at the prison, and any such arrivals would be diverted to another establishment.

Health services

- 2.93 **The governor should work with the chief executive of Warrington primary care trust (PCT) to ensure there is sufficient PCT capacity to provide both strategic and operational support to the development of healthcare in the prison. (4.46)**

Achieved. The head of healthcare described a good level of integration between the prison and PCT, which both commissioned and provided health services to the prison. Minutes of meetings of the prison and the PCT showed attendance by prison healthcare staff. Partnership and commissioning groups met regularly and included senior staff from the prison and the PCT. Specialist PCT support was available for the prison – for example, the PCT infection control specialist had recently visited to carry out an assessment and offer advice and support on action needed. Although prison healthcare staff attended PCT and prison meetings, the number of these was unrealistic for the small team.

Further recommendation

2.94 The schedule of meetings attended by healthcare staff should be prioritised.

2.95 **The governor should work with Warrington primary care trust to ensure shared ownership and responsibility for conducting a health needs assessment and the drawing up and implementation of the prison health delivery plan action plan (4.47)**

Achieved. There were annual health needs assessments, which were used to inform the health delivery plan. These assessments were undertaken by a public health specialist from the PCT in association with healthcare staff at the prison.

2.96 **Algorithm-based nurse triage should be introduced. (4.48)**

Achieved. Triage algorithms had been developed and were available in the clinical room. Staff, including student nurses on placement, were aware of their location and use.

2.97 **There should be medical input to healthcare management to include attendance at the medicines and therapeutics committee and healthcare staff meetings. (4.49)**

Partially achieved. There were regular meetings between the pharmacist, GP and head of healthcare, and minutes of these were appended to the minutes of the medicines and therapeutics meetings. The GP did not attend the monthly staff meetings at the prison, as they were only in the prison for one hour a day five days a week and not available to attend meetings outside this time. The GP raised any concerns through the healthcare manager.

Further recommendation

2.98 The GP should receive minutes of staff meetings.

2.99 **Pharmacy service level agreement should be drawn up and the amount of pharmacist time needed identified to include pharmacist-led clinics, clinical audit and medication review. (4.50)**

Achieved. A pharmacy service level agreement allowed for the pharmacist to attend the prison regularly and conduct review and audit. Prisoners could request appointments to consult him, and this was advertised in the healthcare waiting area. We also saw a nurse invite a prisoner to discuss his medication with the pharmacist.

2.100 **The medicines and therapeutics committee should meet regularly and include Warrington primary care trust (PCT) representation to review and update the formulary, the in-possession policy and special sick policy. (4.51)**

Achieved. The medicines and therapeutics committee met bi-monthly. Meetings were held jointly with the prison that provided pharmacy services to Thorn Cross, and the committee undertook appropriate work. Policies were currently under review to accommodate the needs of the changed population.

2.101 **Patient group directions should be introduced to allow a wider range of medicines to be administered by the nursing staff. (4.52)**

Achieved. Some patient group directions (PGDs) had been developed and were in use. The staff group also included a nurse prescriber and a nurse practitioner, who were available on weekdays and one of whom was also on call at other times. This meant that patients had no unnecessary delay in receiving medication when it was needed.

2.102 Treatment should not take place in the pharmacy at the same time as medicines administration. (4.53)

Achieved. There were no treatments or observations in the room where medication was administered at medication times. Patients were seen in a separate consulting room or given an appointment to attend the healthcare centre at a different time.

2.103 The evening stop smoking and relaxation clinics should be reintroduced. (4.54)

Achieved. Clinics were run flexibly so that prisoners could attend them alongside other programmes and work placements. Smoking cessation support was available on an individual basis, with appointments available at weekends as well as in the week. The team had benefited from a graduate mental health worker who provided individual support for prisoners, including those suffering from anxiety. A community psychiatric nurse also worked with prisoners who had more complex mental health needs.

2.104 The availability of sexual health services should be increased. (4.55)

Achieved. There were weekly sexual health screening clinics, in addition to fortnightly genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics provided by a visiting consultant. The prison was part of the national chlamydia screening programme, and all new arrivals had the opportunity to be tested. A sexual health nurse specialist from the PCT delivered a presentation on sexual health on the induction course.

2.105 Healthcare staff should be trained in child protection and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. (4.56)

Achieved. Although there were no longer juveniles in the establishment, all nurses had received child protection training as part of their PCT mandatory training programme. All nursing staff had also completed cardiopulmonary resuscitation training in the previous 12 months.

2.106 The monthly clinical review meetings should be reinstated. (4.57)

Partially achieved. It had been decided that the monthly clinical review meetings were no longer needed as their membership and content overlapped with other multidisciplinary meetings on the residential units. The community psychiatric nurse (CPN) attended unit meetings when concerns were raised about individual prisoners, but there was no healthcare staff cover in her absence, which could affect information sharing between healthcare and other staff.

2.107 A member of the healthcare team should be delegated to attend residential unit meetings if the community psychiatric nurse is unavailable to attend.

2.108 Secondary mental health care services should be identified and available. (4.58)

Achieved. The healthcare staff team included a community psychiatric nurse and graduate

mental health worker. There were also arrangements for a local early intervention team to attend the prison to assess any prisoner who was a cause for concern.

2.109 Healthcare policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated in line with Warrington primary care trust (PCT) policies and procedures. (4.59)

Partially achieved. Work was under way to update policies and procedures in line with the PCT. Where possible, PCT procedures had been amended to meet the needs of the prisoner population. Where the PCT did not have an appropriate policy or procedure for use in the prison, one was developed. However, some policies and procedures were beyond their review date, and there was no system to ensure their timely review

Further recommendation

2.110 Healthcare policies and procedures should be reviewed by their due date.

Learning and skills and work activities

2.111 The establishment should develop a strategy for education and training that is communicated to all staff (5.13)

Achieved. The 2006 Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) re-inspection recognised that the strategy for education and training had improved significantly, and that there was a clear strategy that was understood by all staff. At this inspection, there was evidence that the learning and skills strategy had further developed to place more emphasis on employability. Learning and skills were central to resettlement objectives and the establishment's development plan.

2.112 Improvements should be made to management information systems for tracking achievement and progress (5.14)

Partially achieved. At the 2006 ALI re-inspection, the management information system was new, and the use of data for monitoring and planning was still weak. This had improved. Data was regularly collected, analysed and used well to monitor and plan activities. Wider management information about the prison population, including that produced by the psychology department, was used to inform programme planning. However, City College Manchester, the education provider, produced retention and achievement data reports centrally. The education manager did not have easy access to current data, and it was not possible for us to judge retention and achievement during this inspection. In physical education, data for key skills achievement was recorded on a separate system from that for other PE achievements.

Further recommendation

2.113 Centrally held retention and achievement data should be easily accessible to prison education managers, and all achievement data should be recorded centrally.

2.114 Systematic verification procedures should be introduced (5.15)

Achieved. All internal verification was the responsibility of the college. It was systematically

planned, and assessors met regularly to ensure a standardised approach to assessment. These meetings also shared good practice. Internal verification arrangements for accredited gardens training made useful links with other establishments that offered the same qualifications.

2.115 The provision to cater better for the needs of learners above level 2 should be expanded. (5.16)

Achieved. Level two and three qualifications were available in industrial cleaning (British Institute of Cleaning Sciences, BICS), enterprise and leadership, and art. The new rail engineering course required sustained learning at level two. A planned e-media course would offer progression opportunities from information technology courses. Few prisoners required opportunities at level three and above, typically about eight a year. Individual arrangements were made for these prisoners, using links with local colleges and universities. For example, one prisoner on a short sentence was due to start a university course three weeks before his sentence ended, and release on temporary licence and supported distance learning were being explored so that he would not fall behind in his studies.

2.116 The range of vocational training opportunities should be increased. (5.24)

Partially achieved. The range of vocational opportunities had increased. Eleven workshops were available in nine vocational areas. There had been significant investment to improve workshop facilities, particularly in motor vehicle maintenance. There was also a new level one course for this workshop, which was recognised by the motor industry, and sponsorship from Toyota to introduce a technical fault diagnosis course. There was new provision in rail engineering, which had recruited 36 learners and had an 83% pass rate. Two had obtained jobs and others were awaiting interviews through a guaranteed interview arrangement. However, there were insufficient training places to meet demand (see paragraph 2.121).

2.117 Comprehensive quality improvement procedures should be developed and introduced. (5.25)

Achieved. There was a comprehensive quality manual to cover all key learning procedures. Quality procedures, based on the college's system, were applied across all learning and skills provision. Observation of teaching and learning was used to identify development points, such as the consistent use of individual learning plans, lesson plans and schemes of work. Feedback from learners was analysed and compared with similar age groups in other prisons in the contractor's remit. The head of learning and skills had re-established the quality improvement group, which met monthly with good representation from each area of learning and skills and the senior management team. This discussed themes as well as a standard agenda. The self-assessment process involved all staff.

2.118 Links and the sharing of good practice between different aspects of the regime should be developed. (5.26)

Achieved. Good practice was shared through a range of regular meetings involving all areas. These included quality improvement group meetings, internal verification activity, self-assessment workshops, and training activities. The whole prison skills for life initiative, supported by the Quality Improvement Agency, had helped raise uniformed staff awareness of literacy and numeracy, and some uniformed staff were preparing to take national tests in these areas.

Additional information

- 2.119 At the time of our inspection, there were 185 prisoners in learning and skills and work activities, including 86 in education, 17 in vocational training, 69 employed and 13 on workouts. Fourteen prisoners were not allocated as they were close to being released. There were enough places, but the balance of activities did not meet demand. A significant proportion of prisoners had not been allocated to their preferred options and there were waiting lists.
- 2.120 The curriculum was under review to reflect the re-role and the learning needs of young adults. There were now many prisoners on shorter sentences, and a short 'job ready' course had been introduced that could be completed in two to three weeks. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) was being enhanced to help prisoners make better informed choices about their learning, training and future employment. There were good external links, which provided opportunities for prisoners to practise their skills, engage with the public and contribute to the wider community. For example, they had produced high quality brickwork for garden displays at the Southport Flower Show, as well as building work to improve facilities in play areas and the environment at accommodation for homeless people.
- 2.121 There were still insufficient vocational places to meet demand. Waiting lists for all construction crafts were long, and some prisoners had left the prison before they obtained a place. The accuracy of the waiting lists was not clear, as they included some prisoners who had left or who had already completed the course. Cover arrangements in construction were still a concern, and there had been no plumbing provision for some time.

Further recommendations

- 2.122 There should be a strategy for vocational provision, particularly construction skills, to meet the needs of the re-rolled prison.
- 2.123 Waiting lists for vocational courses should be accurate and up to date.
- 2.124 There should be adequate staff cover arrangements for training workshops.
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Library

- 2.125 **A range of audio books and music should be provided. (5.17)**

Partially achieved. There was a small range of audio books, but there had been no librarian in the previous month, and they had not been indexed or displayed effectively. The prison had decided not to offer a music CD loan service, as prisoners could buy these through mail order or have them sent in.

Further recommendation

- 2.126 Information about the range of audio books available in the library should be appropriately displayed.
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2.127 Links between library and education and training should be improved. (5.18)

Partially achieved. The library had run some education linked events, such as poetry workshops during Adult Learners' Week, and the six-book challenge. The library was being reorganised to improve the space for learning through computers, and to classify resources in common with other libraries. Education staff had begun to use the library for learning activities. The area librarian had made links with the education department to establish book requirements for the coming year's learning activities.

Further recommendations

2.128 The area librarian and head of learning and skills should develop the work begun to improve links between the library and education.

2.129 Education staff should make use of the library as a learning resource.

Additional information

2.130 There had been no prison librarian or library assistant for the previous month, but temporary librarians had been used and opening hours had not been significantly affected. The appointment of a new librarian and assistant were in hand. The library contract with the Warrington Library Service had been reviewed, and opening hours would extend from 17.5 to 23.25 hours week when the new appointments were made. Library records had not been maintained since April 2008, when 471 books had been issued to prisoners.

Further recommendation

2.131 The Warrington Library Service should appoint the new librarian as quickly as possible and implement the revised library contract.

Physical education and health promotion

2.132 Systems should be put in place to ensure that access to the gym is fair and that retention rates improve. (5.31)

Partially achieved. Access to the gym was fair. However, although the number of prisoners using the gym had increased significantly since the previous inspection, the proportionate rate of retention had declined since the 2006 ALI re-inspection. In 2007-08, 788 prisoners had participated in gym courses, with a retention rate of 64%, compared with 347 participants and 84% retention in 2006. Records of reasons for not completing courses indicated that the largest number were due to poor behaviour or attitude. There was still evidence that prisoners missed parts of courses or did not complete them because they were moved on to other provision in the prison.

Further recommendation

2.133 There should be better coordination of sentence plans to ensure that prisoners can complete physical education courses without interruption.

2.134 The number of accredited courses in physical education should be increased and their quality monitored. (5.32)

Achieved. There had been considerable investment in gym resources since the 2005 inspection, and the range of courses expanded. This was recognised at the 2006 ALI re-inspection. The range of qualifications was adequate and provided progression routes to level two, and links with education had improved. A key skills tutor with sports qualifications worked alongside PE staff to provide key skills in context, such as developing numeracy skills through use of the body mass index. All PE courses were monitored, and there were self-assessments at individual course level that contributed to the overall gym self-assessment.

Additional information

2.135 At the 2006 re-inspection, 260 out of 291 participants on PE courses had completed qualifications, a high pass rate of 89%. In 2007-08, 508 out of 788 participants had completed courses and 374 passed, a decline in the pass rate to 73%. Staffing in the gym had reduced by two since the re-role. The gym team had begun some football enrichment work with Manchester City football club. There were plans to introduce half-day courses to provide more flexibility, and establish sports-related work-outs for those who had passed fitness and sports qualifications.

Further recommendations

2.136 Staffing levels in the gym should be adequate to maintain the improvements identified in 2006, and to continue to develop curriculum and enrichment activities.

2.137 Plans to introduce more flexible provision and sports-related work-outs should be implemented.

Faith and religious activity

2.138 The post of full-time coordinating chaplain should be filled as a priority. (5.41)

Achieved. This post had been filled in September 2007 by a chaplain with experience of ministry in a prison setting. This was the only full-time post in the chaplaincy, although the coordinator was supported by an extensive team of part-time and sessional chaplains for the major faiths.

2.139 The multi-faith room should have facilities for young people to wash their feet immediately prior to Muslim prayers. (5.42)

Not achieved. This recommendation had not been accepted, and we were told that the Muslim chaplain who attended for Friday prayers was content that prisoners could meet their religious obligations by washing on their residential units beforehand. Muslim prisoners constituted about 8% of the population.

We repeat the recommendation.

Additional information

- 2.140 The coordinating chaplain had an inclusive approach to the work of the chaplaincy. A full programme offered services for the major faiths, with a variety of worship options, as well as faith-based courses. The chaplaincy also supported the peer mentoring scheme, and family days linked to religious festivals.
- 2.141 Chaplaincy facilities were reasonable. The chapel was well equipped and reflected the diversity of faiths in the prison. The multi-faith room, although small, had recently been redecorated and was a reasonably respectful environment adequate to meet current needs.

Time out of cell

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

Additional information

- 2.142 The prison reported a time out of room figure of 12.5 hours per day. The method of recording this figure was crude and based on unchallenged assumptions – for example, that the prison always opened and closed down on time, and that there were no interruptions to published routines – but it reflected the broad reality for most prisoners and easily exceeded our expectation of 10 hours per day. Prisoners were unlocked at 7.30am and, except for a quiet time of about an hour after lunch when movement was restricted, they were out in activity or association until 8.45pm. The day for prisoners on the HIT centre began even earlier, at 6am. There was some evidence of slippage in core day routines, but these were not great.
- 2.143 Association was available each evening and on Friday afternoons, when work activity was curtailed. There was no evidence that association was cancelled. There were no formal exercise periods.

Security and rules

- 2.144 **A detailed analysis of absconding behaviour, including information provided by young people who have absconded, should be conducted and should be used to inform an overall prevention strategy. (6.7)**

Achieved. The psychology department had completed a comprehensive enquiry that had included a survey of young prisoners who had absconded. This had examined the characteristics, typologies and motivations of absconders, and had led to an action plan to address the issue. Interventions that were believed to have affected the absconding rate included the introduction of a mid-week visits session for newly arrived prisoners. This was a response to the finding that prisoners were more likely to abscond in their first few days. The prison had also decided, in partnership with the Cheshire police, to prosecute all absconders, and some had received additional prison sentences of up to four months. This initiative and the consequences of absconding were explained to new arrivals in a presentation by the police intelligence and liaison officer during induction. These initiatives had been successful in reducing the rate of absconding. In the first six months of 2008, there had been 12 incidents of absconding, down from 44 in the same period in 2007.

Additional information

- 2.145 There was a small security department led by a principal officer, with two senior officers and administrative support. There was also a full-time police intelligence and liaison officer, which was unusual for an open establishment. The security committee met monthly and managed a broad agenda. The quality of data provided to the committee was satisfactory, but the quality of analysis was less evident from the minutes. Security was supported by residential unit liaison officers who attended and reported to the security committee. Methodologies were in place to communicate security priorities to the prison.
- 2.146 The prison had received about 400 security information reports in 2008 to date and was projected to receive approximately 1,000 for the year as a whole. This was almost double the number received in 2007. Security information reports covered a breadth of subjects, but there was little evidence that security concerns were focused on a particular unit or among particular prisoner or had risen because of the re-role. The security department suggested that the increase in reports was due to greater staff awareness of security issues. The management of security information seemed appropriate and was balanced against other information, and interventions seemed proportionate.

Discipline

- 2.147 **There should be regular adjudication standardisation meetings and these should be minuted. (6.28)**

Achieved. There were regular adjudication standardisation meetings, chaired by the Governor, which were minuted.

- 2.148 **Adjudication hearings on juveniles should be conducted in a more age-appropriate setting. (6.29)**

No longer relevant.

- 2.149 **Award tariffs should be published to staff and young people. (6.30)**

Achieved. Award tariffs had recently been updated and were publicised on all residential units.

- 2.150 **Young people should be informed of the appeal process both verbally and in writing after receiving an adjudication award. (6.31)**

Achieved. Following a finding of guilt at adjudication, details were explained to the prisoner both verbally and in writing. He was also shown the relevant form to appeal against his finding of guilt and/or award.

- 2.151 **All charges should be fully investigated. (6.32)**

Not achieved. We found several examples in recently completed adjudications where charges had not been fully investigated. The written records indicated that adjudicators had not asked all the questions necessary to enquire fully into a charge. The handwriting on many adjudication records was difficult, if not impossible, to read.

Further recommendation

2.152 All charges should be fully investigated, and written records of hearings should be legible.

Additional information

- 2.153 All adjudication hearings took place in a dedicated room in the care and separation unit (CSU). Adjudications had averaged 22 per week in 2008, a slight decrease on the 2007 average of 25.5, but significantly higher than at the last inspection.
- 2.154 Minor reports operated on the three units holding young adults. The system was not used excessively, with just over eight per week since the start of 2008. Punishment awards were mainly limited to short periods of extra work or removal of in-room TV. Few charges fell out of time, and these arrangements worked well overall.
- 2.155 Use of force documentation should be certified by an appropriate manager who was not involved in the original incident. The certifying officer should ensure that all documentation is completed correctly and an F213 (injury to inmate form) is attached. (6.33)

Partially achieved. Use of force documentation was still routinely certified by the supervising officer. We also found examples where the supervising officer had not signed the documentation at all. Apart from those exceptions, documentation was generally well completed, with an injury to inmate form (F213) correctly filed.

Further recommendation

2.156 Use of force documentation should be certified by an appropriate manager not involved in the original incident, and completed correctly by the supervising officer.

Additional information

- 2.157 The establishment exceeded its target for control and restraint (C&R) refresher training, with a year-to-date figure of 88.5% of staff trained against the 80% target. There had been 15 use of force incidents since the start of 2008, but only four involved use of C&R. In most incidents, prisoners had been cuffed during escort to the CSU, usually following intelligence that they might attempt to abscond. The quality of staff statements following use of force incidents was generally good, and provided reasonable assurance that force had only been used as a last resort. Planned use of force incidents were not video recorded, and there were no arrangements to do so.

Further recommendation

2.158 Planned use of force incidents should be video recorded, and tapes placed in evidence bags and secured for evidential purposes.

2.159 The unfurnished cell should be replaced or taken out of use. (6.34)

Achieved. The unfurnished cell in the care and separation unit had been taken out of use and not been replaced.

2.160 There should be a greater level of continuity among staff working in the segregation unit. (6.35)

Achieved. The care and separation unit (CSU) was staffed from unit four. The posts had been advertised and staff interviewed to ensure their suitability. Four officers covered the CSU most of the time, and four additional officers were used as their reliefs. Staff told us that these arrangements had addressed the lack of continuity problems in this unit.

2.161 All elements of the segregation unit regime should be delivered each day and this should be clearly demonstrated through the daily log. (6.36)

Not achieved. Staff were required to record individual prisoner access to each element of the CSU regime, including exercise, shower, phone and cell cleaning. While staff told us that all prisoners received access to all these elements on most days, gaps in recording meant that this could not be evidenced.

Further recommendation

2.162 Staff in the care and separation unit (CSU) should complete daily written records to confirm that prisoners have access to all elements of the regime.

2.163 Education work in room should be provided for young adults held in the segregation unit. (6.37)

Not achieved. In-cell education work was not routinely offered to residents in the CSU.

Further recommendation

2.164 In-cell education work should be offered routinely to prisoners held in the CSU.

2.165 Entries in wing history files should consistently demonstrate that people in the segregation unit are being effectively monitored and that staff are engaging with them on a daily basis. (6.38)

Not achieved. CSU staff opened a separate unit history page on prisoners held in the unit, which was inserted into their unit history file when they returned to normal location. Although CSU staff made regular entries on prisoners in their care, these were mainly restricted to facts such as access to exercise or a shower, and very few entries demonstrated any positive staff engagement with prisoners.

Further recommendation

2.166 CSU staff should effectively monitor and engage with prisoners held there each day, and record evidence of this in unit history files.

2.167 Young people held in the segregation unit should be visited daily by a healthcare professional. (6.39)

Achieved. Statutory visitors, including a healthcare professional, had to record the times they entered and left the CSU in the unit register. A review of the previous weeks confirmed that a healthcare professional visited the CSU daily whenever it was occupied.

Additional information

2.168 Since the last inspection, the care and separation unit had been split into two discrete areas. Four cells at one end were used for usual segregation purposes, and the remaining 10 rooms had been used for juveniles arriving direct from court. As juveniles were no longer held, these rooms had been used only occasionally, mainly to hold prisoners for a short period at their own request. We were also told that they could be used as an overflow from the main units or the CSU, but this had not been necessary. The accommodation in these 10 rooms was markedly better than those used for segregation. They had wooden furniture, ceramic sanitary fittings and in-cell power, compared with the fixed metal beds, stainless steel sanitary fittings and no in-cell power in the segregation rooms. All areas of the CSU were very clean.

2.169 The names of staff selected to work in the CSU were publicised. Prisoners located there were not given a copy of the rules and routines, and the previous information was under review. Prisoners located there were also routinely strip searched without a risk assessment.

2.170 Safety algorithms were routinely completed on prisoners in the CSU and reviews took place as necessary. Stays in the CSU tended to be short. Prisoners located there could be given a handheld television or small radio, subject to the Governor's discretion. These appliances were rechargeable and staff supplied replacement batteries.

Further recommendations

2.171 Prisoners who are located into the CSU should be given an easy-to-read booklet describing its regime and routines.

2.172 Prisoners who are located into the CSU should only be strip searched on the basis of a risk assessment.

Incentives and earned privileges

2.173 The incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy document should be revised to provide comprehensive details on each of the three schemes currently in operation. (6.54)

Partially achieved. The incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme had been revised and the policy updated in September 2007. However, the policy described only one scheme and stated that the HIT centre operated this, even though the centre had its own separate scheme (see paragraph 2.180). The policy also indicated that there was a separate IEP system for juveniles, but this was no longer relevant.

Further recommendation

2.174 The incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy document should be corrected to provide comprehensive details of the schemes currently in operation.

2.175 Young adults transferring on to the high intensity training (HIT) programme should be able to enter the scheme on the enhanced level if they had been on that level at their previous establishment. (6.55)

Achieved. Prisoners in the HIT centre could maintain their enhanced status if they arrived on that level.

2.176 Young people on units 2 and 3 should be able to earn additional points in accordance with the published incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy. (6.56)

Partially achieved. We were told that prisoners could earn points for positive behaviour, and we saw examples where this had happened. It was not clear, however, that this was applied consistently. There was clear guidance to staff about how points could/should be deducted, but nothing about how points could be won. Some prisoners expressed concerns that this could be arbitrary and based on favouritism.

Further recommendation

2.177 There should be clear guidance for staff and prisoners indicating how prisoners can win IEP points for positive behaviour.

2.178 The circumstances leading to any deduction of incentives and earned privileges (IEP) points and the member of staff authorising such a deduction should be clearly recorded in the records on unit 2. (6.57)

Achieved. When staff made deductions, they entered information about this on an IEP log on their unit. Although prisoners were not necessarily told immediately of a deduction, they were able to check the reason at any time, and challenge it if they wished.

Additional information

2.179 The IEP scheme had become the backbone of behaviour management at Thorn Cross. The model was well known to all prisoners and staff, although even within the main units there was some variation in its application. On units one and two, all prisoners started with 101 points each week and could have points deducted over the following seven days for a variety of infractions. The number of points at the end of the week determined their IEP status. On units three and four, points were also used to determine IEP level, but were accumulated daily up to a maximum of 101.

2.180 The HIT centre on unit five operated a different scheme. Here a total of 60 points was available each week, and prisoners had to achieve 75% (45 points) in each area to qualify for enhanced status. We were told that this difference was because the HIT centre required more rigorous

behaviour management to reinforce the programme's ethos. Nevertheless, there appeared no good reason why the same model should not be applied across the whole establishment.

- 2.181 Although the difference between standard and enhanced status was limited to an extra visit each month, access to Wednesday evening visits, higher private cash and pin phone levels, most prisoners wanted to achieve the higher level. Across units one to five, 54% of prisoners were on enhanced level and 45% on standard. On the HIT centre, almost 80% of prisoners were enhanced.

Further recommendation

- 2.182 The same IEP model should be applied across all units at Thorn Cross.
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Catering

- 2.183 **Food comments books should be freely available without request and comments should be replied to in the same book. (7.8)**

Not achieved. On only one unit did the prison come close to achieving this recommendation. Kitchen staff told us that complaints books were collected weekly, read, and responded to, but this was not the case. No book was readily accessible in the dining room. One book was held in a unit office and had hardly been used. Another dated from the early 1990s and had also hardly been used. Many responses to comments and complaints were perfunctory.
We repeat the recommendation.

Additional information

- 2.184 There was a weekly meal pre-ordering system based on a three-week menu cycle. Prisoners were mostly content with the quality of the food. We found that the quality of the food was good, portions were adequate and it was well presented. Kitchen staff undertook a survey of prisoners three or four times a year and considered the findings when they developed menus. Hot trolleys were dispatched to the residential units just 10 or 15 minutes before the food was served, and meals were served at reasonable times. All prisoners could dine in association in clean and generally comfortable dining rooms.
- 2.185 The kitchen was clean and had recently received a local authority hygiene award. Halal foods and utensils were kept separate, and we were assured that halal food was properly certificated. Standards of cleanliness at the hotplates were satisfactory, but not all servery workers wore full protective clothing at all times. Prisoners received some hygiene training on induction, but we were less clear about the food handling training for hotplate workers.
- 2.186 Six prisoners worked in the kitchen. They had opportunities to undertake NVQ level one qualifications, but completions were rare.

Further recommendations

- 2.187 Servery workers should wear protective clothing at all times.
- 2.188 All servery workers should receive food handling training.
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Prison shop

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

Additional information

- 2.189 The prison shop was operated by Aramark. Orders were made weekly and delivered using a bagging system. Prisoners raised few concerns regarding the shop, and arrangements appeared to operate smoothly. Order forms were issued to new arrivals, and there were reception packs of shop items for those who missed the weekly delivery.

Strategic management of resettlement

- 2.190 The establishment's resettlement strategy should be reviewed to take into account the needs analysis conducted by the psychology department. It should also specify clearly how resettlement services will be delivered in each of the three distinct areas of Thorn Cross. (8.9)

Not achieved. The reducing reoffending delivery plan, published in July 2007, had been developed independently from the needs analysis, which had been completed in November 2007. The prison recognised the need for a new needs analysis to reflect the change in population.

Further recommendation

- 2.191 There should be a new resettlement needs analysis, and the reducing reoffending delivery plan should be revised to reflect its findings.

- 2.192 More young people should be involved in working out schemes. The establishment should be proactive in encouraging eligible young people with sufficient time left to serve to undertake work in the community before release. (8.10)

Not achieved. Only 13 prisoners were working outside the prison at the time of our inspection, and there had recently been a reduction in the number of placements available. There was a high demand for prisoners serving over four months to undertake accredited programmes, vocational training, education and work outside the prison. There had been no attempt to sequence the opportunities available with prisoners' sentence plans, except for prisoners in the HIT centre.

Further recommendation

- 2.193 Opportunities for prisoners to undertake accredited programmes, vocational training, education and work outside the prison should be appropriately sequenced based on their individual need and requirements of their sentence plan.

- 2.194 Formal exit surveys of young people should be introduced. (8.11)

Not achieved. Exit surveys had not been introduced. Staff in the psychology department reported that they had been consulted about developing an exit survey, but this was not yet

used with prisoners on their discharge or transfer.
We repeat the recommendation.

Additional information

- 2.195 The majority of the population was from the West Midlands area, which was a challenge to ensuring that effective resettlement services could be offered. The prison was trying to develop strategic relationships with a range of national employers to offer meaningful job opportunities to prisoners working outside the prison and those who were discharged. The prison offered considerable assistance to local projects through its working out activities.

Offender management and planning

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

Additional information

- 2.196 An offender management unit was in place. In April 2007, the prison had decided to integrate two uniformed offender supervisors back into the detail, leaving only two non-uniformed offender supervisors. This move had not been a positive one for prisoners, and sentence planning arrangements had suffered as a consequence. The prison was planning to revert to a discrete group of staff in forthcoming re-profiling.
- 2.197 The prison was well focused on prisoners deemed to present a higher risk of harm to others, including multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) cases, prolific and priority offenders, and potential risk to children cases. Public protection arrangements included a monthly risk management team meeting, and written contributions to MAPPA meetings and safeguarding children risk assessments.
- 2.198 Prisoners on the HIT centre were effectively engaged with sentence planning. This unit had held the highest number of sentence planning meetings in the previous three months, reflecting the holistic ethos of the programme.
- 2.199 Prisoners serving short sentences had no sentence planning and relied on their personal officers to motivate them and encourage them to achieve short-term goals.

Further recommendations

- 2.200 Designated offender supervisors should be identified to deliver offender management and sentence planning.
- 2.201 Custody planning arrangements for prisoners serving short sentences should be clarified and delivered.

Resettlement pathways

Reintegration planning

No recommendations were made under this heading at the last inspection.

Additional information

Accommodation

- 2.202 A needs analysis of November 2007 had shown low demand for accommodation advice and services, with a high proportion of respondents planning to return to live with their family. Only 5% of respondents said that they had no or temporary accommodation to go to. A prison contract with Nacro to provide accommodation services had recently ended, but the charity had trained four prison staff to deliver accommodation advice, and prisoners were referred to these staff when required. The HIT centre had made good use of the national Clear Springs agency to find accommodation for prisoners released on home detention curfew (HDC).

Education, training and employment

- 2.203 The learning and skills strategy now placed more emphasis on employability than previously. Learning and skills were central to resettlement objectives and the development plan, with clear cross-references to the relevant resettlement pathways. The range of vocational opportunities had increased (see paragraph 2.116), but there were still insufficient places to meet demand (see paragraph 2.121).
- 2.204 There were some work-out opportunities, with 13 prisoners working out, although the number had been higher. There were plans to establish sports-related work-outs (see paragraph 2.135).

Mental and physical health

- 2.205 Healthcare staff were active in identifying the GPs of new arrivals so that they could request any required information and also send a discharge letter. Prisoners were invited to a discharge interview with a member of healthcare staff before their release, and also invited to complete an exit questionnaire. Most prisoners completed this questionnaire and expressed a high level of satisfaction with the health service. Health staff provided prescribed medication where necessary, and faxed a summary of the prisoner's care to his community GP where possible.
- 2.206 The mental health nurses contacted community mental health teams if a prisoner due for discharge needed follow-up mental health care in the community

Finance, benefit and debt

- 2.207 Jobcentre Plus staff attended the prison on two days a week and concentrated on setting up new benefit claims appointments for prisoners due for release. The prison had attempted to set up bank accounts for some prisoners who worked outside and earned salaries, but had not been successful. There were no other interventions to help prisoners address debt problems or improve their financial literacy.

Further recommendations

- 2.208 Prisoners, especially those working outside in paid employment, should have the opportunity to open bank accounts.

2.209 Prisoners should have access to debt and finance management advice.

Drugs and alcohol

2.210 The establishment should ensure that the designated senior officer has sufficient time to devote to the drug strategy. (8.73)

Achieved. Following restructuring, the designated senior officer now had sufficient time to devote to the drug strategy.

2.211 The drug strategy committee should meet more frequently and encourage better attendance, including that of the area drug strategy coordinator. (8.74)

Achieved. The drug strategy committee generally met monthly, as scheduled. Attendance at meetings was generally good, with the regular presence of representatives from across the prison. The area drug strategy coordinator did not attend meetings, although she visited the prison on a regular basis.

2.212 The revised policy should include an alcohol strategy, be informed by a needs analysis and contain detailed action plans and performance measures. (8.75)

Partially achieved. The drug strategy policy document was being updated at the time of our inspection and was awaiting ratification. It contained action plans and some performance measures, which were mainly target related. Although it described alcohol misuse as a major area of need for the population, there was no alcohol strategy and this area appeared to be underdeveloped. However, new arrivals were asked about previous alcohol use as part of their healthcare screening, and referred to the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATs) if a need was identified. In the resettlement needs analysis in November 2007, 51% of the sample said that they had been drinking when they committed their offence, but only 16.5% considered that alcohol was a problem. A new needs analysis to identify the needs of the current population was planned for September 2008.

Further recommendation

2.213 An alcohol strategy should be developed, with appropriate support available for prisoners with alcohol problems.

2.214 Counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATs) group work should be reintroduced as soon as modules have been validated. (8.76)

Achieved. Most CARAT work took place individually with prisoners, which enabled them to access CARAT services alongside other groups or work placements they were attending. Groups were run when a number of prisoners with similar needs were identified, and modules had been validated. The CARATs team regularly held focus groups, and prisoners had expressed a preference for individual programmes. CARATs also delivered sessions on the induction course, for prisoners pre-placement in the community or home leave, and saw all clients before their release.

2.215 Voluntary drug testing should take place more frequently with sufficient officer time dedicated to this role. (8.77)

Achieved. An officer was responsible for coordinating voluntary drug testing (VDT) and VDT was a profiled activity four days a week. Officers from unit five were allocated to this duty and targets were met.

2.216 The establishment should ensure adequate administrative support for the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATs). (8.80)

Achieved. There was a full-time administrator for the CARATs team, and this arrangement appeared to meet the team's needs.

Children and families of offenders

2.217 There should be information in the waiting area advising visitors how to report concerns about young people. (3.64)

Achieved. There were notices in the front gate waiting area for visitors advising them to complete a safer custody referral form if they had concerns about the prisoner they were visiting. There was a supply of these forms next to a prominent blue box in which they could be posted. There were also several notices en route to the main visits hall encouraging visitors to speak to the visits senior officer if they had any concerns regarding prisoners.

2.218 The visits booking line should be staffed during the afternoon as well as the morning (3.65)

Partially achieved. The visits booking line was now staffed on Monday afternoons as well as every morning. We tested the visits line on Monday afternoon and it was answered promptly. There had been no visitors' survey to assess their satisfaction with this or other visiting arrangements.

Further recommendation

2.219 There should be a visitors' survey to assess levels of satisfaction with booking visits and other aspects of visits arrangements.

Additional information

2.220 Domestic visits were limited to the statutory minimum of one hour, and this appeared to be applied rigidly. With the change to the prison population, a large percentage of prisoners now come from the West Midlands area, with significant travelling times for their visitors. Even if visitors arrived late, there was no facility to extend the visit. Prisoners whose family lived some distance away could receive a two-hour visit if they provided two visiting orders.

2.221 The visits hall was clean, spacious and bright. There was a well-equipped children's play area staffed by local volunteers, but the prison had recently issued a tender to provide this service.

2.222 The education department offered a family links course, which concentrated on developing relationships, parenting and child development. Family days were also offered periodically, and this was further supported by the opportunity to have town visits and release on temporary licence to strengthen family ties.

Further recommendations

- 2.223 The designated period for visits should be increased from one hour.
- 2.224 There should be family link workers to strengthen family relationships.
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Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

- 2.225 **Resources should be provided to allow the development of planned one-to-one work with those who are unable to participate in group sessions. (8.32)**

Not achieved. The psychology department said it was not resourced to provide one-to-one work with prisoners who could not participate in groupwork programmes. Instead, staff focused on the barriers that prevented prisoners from engaging with the programme and attempted to address the underlying issues, such as poor literacy or self-confidence. There were examples of one-to-one offender supervisor work with prisoners, but this was on an ad hoc basis.

Additional information

- 2.226 The prison offered two accredited programmes: enhanced thinking skills (ETS) and the short duration drugs programme. There was significant demand for both programmes, and their completion targets were exceeded. Up to 12 ETS programmes a year were offered. Psychology staff also undertook research in areas such as absconding, anti-bullying and vulnerability. There was also a validated anger management programme.
- 2.227 The high intensity training programme was managed on unit five. This offered a whole regime approach that combined self-discipline, life skills, work and education programmes to up to 24 prisoners. The programme covered induction and preparing for change, and offered increasing opportunities for release on temporary licence, including home leave and work placements in the community. The programme targeted young adults with a high risk of harm or reoffending, mainly prolific or priority offenders and MAPPA level two cases. It was open to young adults with a minimum of six months to serve. In the final eight weeks of sentence, the young prisoner would progress to the independent living unit (ILU).
- 2.228 Prisoners on the ILU were permitted an initial three weekend home leaves, leading to a four-week placement arranged by SOVA, with leave to live at home during the working week. There were examples of placements leading to permanent employment.
- 2.229 The University of Manchester had researched the effectiveness of the programme and published its findings in early 2008. It found high quality relationships between staff and prisoners, and the importance to participants of gradual resettlement.

Section 3: Summary of recommendations

The following is a list of both repeated and further recommendations included in this report. The reference numbers in brackets refer to the paragraph location in the main report.

Recommendations	To the Governor
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First days in custody

- 3.1 There should be a consistent model of assessment and first night observation on all units, based on current best practice. (2.17)

Residential units

- 3.2 Wing cleaners should receive adequate training and protective clothing. (2.20)
- 3.3 Graffiti on units, particular in toilet areas, should be removed, and staff should monitor prisoners for such behaviour. (2.23)
- 3.4 All prisoners should be allowed to wear their own clothes. (2.24)
- 3.5 Prisoners should be allowed to receive property that is properly processed through the visits system. (2.25)
- 3.6 All residential rooms should have notice boards for prisoner displays. (2.30)
- 3.7 Electricity should not be switched off on any of the units. (2.31)

Personal officers

- 3.8 Personal officers should receive training in the sentence planning procedures used for the young people in their care. (2.30)
- 3.9 The regular quality checks by managers of personal officer entries in unit files should use criteria that cover the effectiveness of their engagement with prisoners. (2.36)
- 3.10 Personal officer engagement with prisoners and comments in their files should be oriented towards wider sentence planning and resettlement needs and less focused on negative behaviour under the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme. (2.39)

Bullying and violence reduction

- 3.11 There should be prisoner representatives on the safer custody committee. (2.50)
- 3.12 The violence reduction policy document should be updated to reflect the changes in population. (2.51)
- 3.13 The violence reduction workshops should recommence. (2.52)

- 3.14 All incidents of alleged bullying should be fully investigated. (2.53)
- 3.15 The quality of bully monitoring booklets should be monitored closely and quality checked on completion. (2.54)
- 3.16 Staff should assist identified bullies to complete workbooks to ensure that learning points are understood and reinforced. (2.55)

Self-harm and suicide

- 3.17 All staff should have personal issue anti-ligature knives. (2.61)

Diversity

- 3.18 The prison should draw up a diversity policy, appoint a diversity manager, survey prisoners about their diversity needs and promote all aspects of diversity among prisoners. (2.66)
- 3.19 The prison should ensure that there is equity in access to facilities. (2.67)

Race equality

- 3.20 There should be greater efforts to involve the Muslim chaplain in the race equality action team. (2.69)
- 3.21 Ethnic monitoring should be extended to reflect black and minority ethnic young people's attainment results on the high intensity training programme. (2.70)
- 3.22 There should be more facility time for race equality work, including support for the race equality officer. (2.75)
- 3.23 Prisoner race equality representatives should receive relevant training. (2.76)
- 3.24 Completed racist incident forms should be quality assured externally. (2.77)
- 3.25 Adjudications that result from racist behaviour should be cross-referenced appropriately. (2.78)

Foreign national prisoners

- 3.26 The establishment should produce and implement a foreign nationals policy. (2.80)

Applications and complaints

- 3.27 There should be regular analysis and quality assurance of complaints to identify emerging patterns or trends and to improve practice. (2.83)
- 3.28 Quality control should be introduced for governor's applications. (2.85)
- 3.29 Governors should date their responses to applications. (2.86)
- 3.30 There should be a consistent system for applications throughout the establishment. (2.87)

Legal rights

- 3.31 There should be a trained legal services officer. (2.90)

Health services

- 3.32 The schedule of meetings attended by healthcare staff should be prioritised. (2.94)
- 3.33 The GP should receive minutes of staff meetings. (2.98)
- 3.34 A member of the healthcare team should be delegated to attend residential unit meetings if the community psychiatric nurse is unavailable to attend. (2.107)
- 3.35 Healthcare policies and procedures should be reviewed by their due date. (2.110)

Learning and skills and work activities

- 3.36 Centrally held retention and achievement data should be easily accessible to prison education managers, and all achievement data should be recorded centrally. (2.113)
- 3.37 There should be a strategy for vocational provision, particularly construction skills, to meet the needs of the re-rolled prison. (2.122)
- 3.38 Waiting lists for vocational courses should be accurate and up to date. (2.123)
- 3.39 There should be adequate staff cover arrangements for training workshops. (2.124)
- 3.40 Information about the range of audio books available in the library should be appropriately displayed. (2.126)
- 3.41 The area librarian and head of learning and skills should develop the work begun to improve links between the library and education. (2.128)
- 3.42 Education staff should make use of the library as a learning resource. (2.129)
- 3.43 The Warrington Library Service should appoint the new librarian as quickly as possible and implement the revised library contract. (2.131)

Physical education and health promotion

- 3.44 There should be better coordination of sentence plans to ensure that prisoners can complete physical education courses without interruption. (2.133)
- 3.45 Staffing levels in the gym should be adequate to maintain the improvements identified in 2006, and to continue to develop curriculum and enrichment activities. (2.136)
- 3.46 Plans to introduce more flexible provision and sports-related work-outs should be implemented. (2.137)

Faith and religious activity

- 3.47 The multi-faith room should have facilities for worshippers to wash their feet immediately prior to Muslim prayers. (2.139)

Discipline

- 3.48 All charges should be fully investigated, and written records of hearings should be legible. (2.152)
- 3.49 Use of force documentation should be certified by an appropriate manager not involved in the original incident, and completed correctly by the supervising officer. (2.156)
- 3.50 Planned use of force incidents should be video recorded, and tapes placed in evidence bags and secured for evidential purposes.(2.158)
- 3.51 Staff in the care and separation unit (CSU) should complete daily written records to confirm that prisoners have access to all elements of the regime. (2.162)
- 3.52 In-cell education work should be offered routinely to prisoners held in the CSU. (2.164)
- 3.53 CSU staff should effectively monitor and engage with prisoners held there each day, and record evidence of this in unit history files. (2.166)
- 3.54 Prisoners who are located into the CSU should be given an easy-to-read booklet describing its regime and routines. (2.171)
- 3.55 Prisoners who are located into the CSU should only be strip searched on the basis of a risk assessment. (2.172)

Incentives and earned privileges

- 3.56 The incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy document should be corrected to provide comprehensive details of the schemes currently in operation. (2.174)
- 3.57 There should be clear guidance for staff and prisoners indicating how prisoners can win IEP points for positive behaviour. (2.177)
- 3.58 The same IEP model should be applied across all units at Thorn Cross. (2.182)

Catering

- 3.59 Food comments books should be freely available without request, and comments should be replied to in the same book. (2.183)
- 3.60 Servery workers should wear protective clothing at all times. (2.187)
- 3.61 All servery workers should receive food handling training. (2.188)

Strategic management of resettlement

- 3.62 There should be a new resettlement needs analysis, and the reducing reoffending delivery plan should be revised to reflect its findings. (2.191)
- 3.63 Opportunities for prisoners to undertake accredited programmes, vocational training, education and work outside the prison should be appropriately sequenced based on their individual need and requirements of their sentence plan. (2.193)
- 3.64 Formal exit surveys should be introduced. (2.194)

Offender management and planning

- 3.65 Designated offender supervisors should be identified to deliver offender management and sentence planning. (2.200)
- 3.66 Custody planning arrangements for prisoners serving short sentences should be clarified and delivered. (2.201)

Resettlement pathways

- 3.67 Prisoners, especially those working outside in paid employment, should have the opportunity to open bank accounts.(2.208)
- 3.68 Prisoners should have access to debt and finance management advice. (2.209)
- 3.69 An alcohol strategy should be developed, with appropriate support available for prisoners with alcohol problems. (2.213)
- 3.70 Evening visits should be available to all prisoners whatever their incentives and earned privileges (IEP) status. (2.3)
- 3.71 Refreshments should be available for visitors on evening visits. (2.4)
- 3.72 There should be a visitors' survey to assess levels of satisfaction with booking visits and other aspects of visits arrangements. (2.219)
- 3.73 The designated period for visits should be increased from one hour. (2.223)
- 3.74 There should be family link workers to strengthen family relationships. (2.224)

Example of good practice

- 3.75 The race equality officer advised prisoners with records of racially aggravated offences or racist views of the requirements of the race equality policy and the prison's required standards of behaviour. (2.79)

Appendix I: Inspection team

Martin Lomas	Team leader
Keith McInnis	Inspector
Steve Moffat	Inspector
Marie Orrell	Inspector
Mandy Whittingham	Healthcare inspector
Susan Bain	Ofsted inspector

Appendix II: Prison population profile

(i) Status	Number of prisoners	%
Sentenced	225	100
Total	225	100

(ii) Sentence	Number of prisoners	%
Less than 6 months	19	8.4
6 months-less than 12 months	25	11.1
12 months-less than 2 years	39	17.3
2 years-less than 4 years	104	46.2
4 years-less than 10 years	38	16.8
Total	225	99.8

(iii) Length of stay	Number of prisoners	%
Less than 1 month	23	10.2
1 month to 3 months	48	21.3
3 months to 6 months	66	29.3
6 months to 1 year	73	32.4
1 year to 2 years	15	6.7
Total	225	99.9

(iv) Main offence	Number of prisoners	%
Violence against the person	30	13.3
Burglary	23	10.2
Robbery	42	18.6
Theft & handling	4	1.8
Fraud and forgery	1	0.4
Drugs offences	39	17.3
Other offences	86	38.2
Total	225	99.8

(v) Age	Number of prisoners	%
18 years	25	11.1
19 years	58	25.8
20 years	68	30.2
21 years	43	19.1
22 years +	31	13.8
Total	225	100

(vi) Home address	Number of prisoners	%
Within 50 miles of the prison	77	34
Between 50 and 100 miles of the prison	99	44
Over 100 miles from the prison	42	18.6
No fixed address	7	3.4
Total	225	100

(vii) Nationality	Number of prisoners	%
British	225	100
Foreign nationals	-	-
Total	225	100

(viii) Ethnicity	Number of prisoners	%
<i>White:</i>		
British	176	78.2
Other White	3	1.3
<i>Mixed:</i>		
White and Black Caribbean	8	3.5
White and Black African	2	0.8
Other Mixed	4	1.7
<i>Asian or Asian British:</i>		
Indian	2	0.8
Pakistani	11	4.9
Bangladeshi	2	0.8
Other Asian	3	1.3
<i>Black or Black British:</i>		
Caribbean	6	2.7
African	1	0.4
Other Black	7	3.1
Total	225	99.5

(ix) Religion	Number of prisoners	%
Church of England	45	20
Roman Catholic	33	14.7
Other Christian denominations	2	0.9
Muslim	18	8
Sikh	1	0.4
Other	3	1.3
No religion	123	54.7
Total	225	100